

Book Reviews

welcome, and medical historians will have cause to be grateful for this worthy legacy from Prof. Merke, who died on 6 June 1975.

The subject is pursued from the Ice Age through the Middle Ages down to the nineteenth century, and includes quotations from the many original texts of Ancient Egyptian, Ethiopian, Grecian, Roman, and Arabian authors. The well-documented works of medical and lay personalities are recorded, many with brief biographical notes. The author states that, "The Ice Age must be the primordial cause of Endemic Goitre", for the soil and water are impoverished of iodine by erosion and the leaching of glaciation. This is illustrated by maps of these endemic areas in Switzerland, the Iberian Peninsula, Scandinavia, and North America. Such iodine-containing agents found in marine plant life as *spongia marina* and *bella usta* were used empirically for endemic goitre in the twelfth century by the School of Salerno, which is ranked "as the cradle of conservative treatment of goitre". Despite the suggestion in 1825 that iodine in the diet would serve as a prophylaxis, a century elapsed before this was adopted.

Endemic cretinism is considered as being equally as old. The Cagots in the Pyrenees, an outcast race of Southern France, were confused with lepers and as such were segregated from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries, when they were identified by later chroniclers as cretins with or without goitres, and not as monsters. The co-existence of goitre and cretinism is found in the carvings at Aosta Cathedral of the fifteenth century near the Great St Bernard area.

The iconography section receives expert attention, and includes fine illustrations, some in colour, of goitrous and cretinous figures through the ages from manuscripts, misericords, Indian art, psalters, altar pieces, and even puppets.

V. A. J. Swain
Chigwell, Essex

MIKULAS SIMON, *Die soziale Stellung der Apotheker in der Zürcher Stadtgesellschaft in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, Stuttgart, Deutscher Apotheker Verlag, 1983, 8vo, pp. xii, 298, illus., DM.42.00.

The author, a practising pharmacist in Zurich, presents in this book the results of a thorough study of the abundant source material kept in Zurich archives concerning the local history of apothecaries and pharmacists from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. In preparing his doctoral thesis, he was supervised by Professor Rudolf Schmitz, Marburg, who also contributes a substantial foreword.

Investigating the social position of their predecessors has always fascinated the historians of a profession or trade. The author attacks the problems in a laudable attitude of criticism. In the first part of his book, he outlines the three main hypotheses discussed in literature about the origin and development of his profession: (1) continuity from monastic to lay pharmacy; (2) specialization of spice dealers and shopkeepers (confirmed in the case of Zurich); (3) legal institutionalization. A chronological list of fifty-nine quotations shows how the terminology in the source documents changes from "*Speciger*" (spice dealer) in 1291 to "*apothecarius*" or "*Apotheker*" in the fifteenth century. This leads Simon to the conclusion that one has to be very cautious in defining the exact meaning of terms; only the analysis of the stock-in-trade and of social and legal conditions may throw more light on the activities of the so-called apothecaries, vacillating between trade and science.

Parts 2 and 3 are devoted to short accounts of the political, social, and economic history of the city-state of Zurich and the development of a public health organization. It seems that the guilds' government, which was in power since 1336, was not very keen on organizing public health care. While the office of the town physician became a constant institution, a town apothecary is mentioned only in one instance in 1293. During the whole period here considered, apothecaries were subordinate to doctors. Their shops were visited by the town physician and the trade was regulated by the authorities; doctors, on the other hand, were allowed to dispense drugs themselves.

As the author shows in part 4 of his book, a higher social rank was attained by "apothecaries" only if they went into wholesale trade in raw materials and banking, entrusting

Book Reviews

the retail trade of spices and drugs to the care of their servants (“*Apothekerknechte*”). One of these, Hans Minner, was to become the most important pharmacist of the German Middle Ages. Others became partners of their masters, e.g. Caspar Schneberger (c.1495), who probably was the first apothecary to specialize exclusively in medical pharmaceuticals. As retail traders in Zurich, “apothecaries” belonged to the traders’ and shopkeepers’ guild (*Krämerzunft, Zunft zur Saffran*); at this point the author convincingly destroys some old legends. As a member of the “*Saffran*”-guild, “apothecary” Jacob Schwartzmurer (1439–75)—Minner was his servant—was elected Burgomaster of Zurich.

The book is completed by biographical data from archival documents, some illustrations showing the localization of Zurich pharmacies from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, sixty pages of source publications, a bibliography, and an index of personal names.

Urs Boschung
University of Zurich

HUBERT FISCHER, *Der deutsche Sanitätsdienst 1921–1945*, 2 vols., Osnabrück, Biblio; Chichester, John Wiley; vol. 1 (1982): pp. viii, 290, DM.68.00; vol. 2 (1983): pp. 291–1430, DM.160.00.

The author, himself a military physician (for his numerous post-war publications in the field, see vol. 2, p. 1388f.), presents a vast collection of facts (concerning organization, ranks, etc.) and reports (concerning battle-field experiences and the like). Apart from German sources, he uses in particular many Russian publications to describe in some detail the Soviet-Russian “*Sanitätsdienst*” during World War II, thus following his plan to illustrate “the experiences of the—at that time—Allied Forces, too, because these show impressively what the ‘other side’ did to preserve the life and health of their soldiers” (vol. 1 p. III). All this gives the big compilation its undoubted value (which would have been still greater if there had been indexes of names, etc.) and makes it, as far as it goes, a sort of history of the German “*Sanitätsdienst*” in the period under discussion. The question is, however, whether the book goes far enough, the more so because by far the greater part deals with a peculiar political situation: that of the Third Reich.

Reviewed from this point of view, the work reveals a remarkable amount of political abstinence, occasionally (very rarely, to be sure) interrupted by remarks that seem to show, by implication at least, a certain political tendency. One example may illustrate this: in the author’s own words, the German war against Soviet Russia was “according to Russian phraseology (*‘Sprachgebrauch’*), an attack based on a broken word” (vol. 2 p. 447). Does the author think otherwise, in this respect?

As for political abstinence, we do not blame the author for having neglected the “*Sanitätsdienste*” of Nazi (National Socialist) paramilitary organizations such as the SA and SS (although some “*Wehrmacht*” doctors certainly came from such organizations or from the Free Corps, having been active in the early 1920s, partly under the name “*Schwarze Reichswehr*”, which meant an illegal part of the legal *Reichswehr*, with which the author deals briefly in vol. 1.). Perhaps it would have been appropriate at least to touch on the question how far, in the author’s opinion, the “*Waffen-SS*” was a genuine part of the “*Wehrmacht*” or not (a hotly debated theme in post-war Germany). But what we feel bound to criticize is the author’s attempt to evade certain—in the circumstances—essential aspects of his theme: (a) how far was the “*Sanitätsdienst*” of the “*Wehrmacht*” infiltrated by Nazi ideology, and how far, in particular, were “*Sanitätsdienst*” functionaries and institutions involved in those experiments with human beings that were characteristic of the Nazi system? (b) are there any traces of resistance against, or criticism of, that system on the part of German military doctors?

Recently, it has been argued that the “ideological manipulation” of German military doctors during the Third Reich was more or less complete (see H. Jentzsch’s paper in A. Thom and H. Spaar (editors), *Medizin im Faschismus*, East Berlin, Gesellschaft für Geschichte der Medizin in der DDR, 1983). This assumption remains to be checked very carefully. The question is, for instance, how far a journal like *Der deutsche Militärarzt* (full of political ideology in those years) mirrored the political attitude of a majority of German military doctors, and whether it was read by many of them. Was it typical, instead, that